

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TTBB TRANSCRIPTION TECHNIQUES
OF RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS:
WITH A TRANSCRIPTION OF *DONA NOBIS PACEM* FOR MEN'S CHORUS

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BY
KENNETH ALAN HARNED
DISSERTATION ADVISOR: DR. DUANE R. KARNA

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA

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ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: An Analysis of the TTBB Transcription Techniques of Ralph Vaughan Williams: With a Transcription of *Dona Nobis Pacem* for Men's Chorus

STUDENT: Kenneth Alan Harned

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Ralph Vaughan Williams was a strong advocate for adapting his compositions to suit the needs of various ensembles. He often arranged his choral compositions for several different voicings, allowing them to be performed by mixed, men's, and women's choruses. He also frequently offered reduced instrumentation accompaniment options to fit the personnel and budget restraints of these choirs.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the male chorus transcription techniques used by Ralph Vaughan Williams in transcribing his composition for chorus and orchestra, *Five Mystical Songs*, from SATB to TTBB voicing. The culmination of this research is a modern day transcription of Vaughan Williams's *Dona Nobis Pacem* for men's chorus, brass septet, organ and percussion. This transcription adds to the men's choral repertoire and increases the work's accessibility for school and community choruses by creating a reduced accompaniment that maintains the flavor of the original orchestral instrumentation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rationale for Creating Men's Chorus Transcriptions

A large quantity of men's choral literature currently being published consists of arrangements transcribed from mixed chorus compositions. When choosing repertoire, the conductor must evaluate the quality of such arrangements and decide if they offer appropriate educational and aesthetic value for their choruses and audiences. In his choral methods textbook, *Secondary Choral Methods*, Kenneth Phillips states:

There is a lot of choral literature to perform, and choral directors today can avoid choosing music of master composers that is arranged by someone else for other voicings. An SSA arrangement of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" is not a good idea – Why tamper with genius? With sufficient SSA music available, choosing an arrangement that misrepresents an SATB masterwork is not necessary. Some arrangements merely simplify a work at a less demanding level. Again, the choral director needs to be suspicious of arrangements of masterworks, unless it is known that the original ideas of the composer have not been violated.¹

As a choral director who has worked extensively with junior high, men's, and women's choruses, I disagree with this statement and believe that there are many valid reasons to create and perform works that were originally composed for other voicings. I do, however, agree that arrangements that strive to maintain the original ideas and compositional style of the composer are the best.

¹ Kenneth Phillips, *Directing the Choral Music Program* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 149.

There is a shortage of quality music being published for TTBB choruses today. To meet market demands and increase the accessibility of their compositions, many composers and arrangers publish their works in a variety of voicings, including SATB, SAB, SSA, and Unison/2-part. However, few of these versions are provided for men's chorus. The only publisher today that has a comparatively extensive library of TTBB arrangements is the independent Yelton Rhodes Music founded in 1995 to meet the literature needs of the burgeoning gay and lesbian choral movement, which includes many men's choruses.

Men's choral repertoire has a strong tradition of including works transcribed from SATB sources. The men's glee club movement in America has inspired choral series that include TTBB transcriptions. Former glee club conductors contributed greatly to these series, including Archibald Davison and Jameson Marvin, from Harvard University; Phillip Duey, from the University of Michigan; and Marshall Bartholomew and Fenno Heath, from Yale University.

Many composers arrange their own works for different voicings to increase the accessibility of their music and have it shared with a larger audience. These prolific composers include Robert Shaw, Alice Parker, Morten Lauridsen, and John Rutter. Ralph Vaughan Williams was also a major proponent of this practice, arranging his works to suit the needs of various ensembles. The transcription process does not always begin with the mixed voicing. Several great compositions, including Randall Thompson's "Testament of Freedom" and David Conte's "Invocation and Dance," were written for men's chorus first and later transcribed for SATB chorus.

While men's ensembles have commissioned TTBB arrangements of many individual songs, there are very few published, major, multi-movement works for men's choruses. With the popularity of community and men's choruses increasing, due in large part to the many gay choruses which have been created over the past thirty years, there is a need for substantial works to be created. Just as major works are a staple of mixed choral concerts, they are also performed by men's choruses when available. Member choruses of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA) such as the Turtle Creek Chorale, Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles (GMCLA), Boston Gay Men's Chorus (BGMC), and San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus (SFGMC) have commissioned many multi-movement, original TTBB works in the past twenty years. These include Robert Seeley's *Naked Man* (SFGMC), Roger Bourland's *Hidden Legacies* (GMCLA), and David Conte's *Eos* (BGMC). Unpublished TTTB transcriptions of major works including John Rutter's *Gloria* and *Requiem*, Francis Poulenc's *Gloria*, and Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* have also been created by contemporary arrangers and performed by GALA choruses. These exceptional compositions have great musical merit and deserve to be shared with wider audiences and different types of choruses.

Changes in accompaniment can also increase the accessibility of a composition. Most school and community choruses do not have regular access to a symphony orchestra, and it is cost prohibitive to hire a full orchestra. Thus, many choral works have been arranged with piano accompaniment, such as Phillip Duey's arrangement of Handel's "Hallelujah, Amen," Mason Marten's edition of Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and Archibald Davison's arrangement of Beethoven's "Hallelujah Chorus" from *Mount of Olives*. These arrangements are practical, but lack the dynamic of having multiple

instruments. One common method composers have used to add flavor to their arrangements is creating different accompaniment options for small string, woodwind, or brass ensembles. These include Randol Alan Bass's "Gloria," for brass and percussion or full orchestra; Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, for two pianos and percussion or full orchestra; and Robert Seeley's "A Jubilant Gloria," for brass ensemble or four-hand piano.

Of course, many compositions are written specifically to be sung *a cappella* or with piano accompaniment and need not be altered. I believe the composer's intent should be taken into consideration when determining the use of alternate instrumentation. The most ideal accompaniment options are the ones originally offered by the composer. However, if the original instrumentation includes forces beyond the reach of a chorus, such as a full orchestra, then I advocate creating your own reduced accompaniment that meets the needs of your group and aims to capture as much of the flavor of the original as possible. The choice of instruments to be used can vary depending on the style and mood of the piece as well as the instrumentalists available for performance. Featuring strings may work better on one composition while using brass could complement another.

The men's choral movement in the United States is very popular today and there is demand for quality, TTBB choral literature. Transcriptions of SATB works have been, and will continue to be, a source of inspiration for men's choral arrangements. Ralph Vaughan Williams was a proponent of making his compositions available for a wide variety of musical ensembles through the use of transcriptions and different orchestration options. There were times when he created TTBB versions of his SATB arrangements and other times when he first composed a piece for men's chorus before transcribing it

for a mixed choir. It is logical to study his methods and utilize them in creating new versions of his works. Revealing the transcription techniques of this important composer will help future arrangers in creating their own transcriptions.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the male chorus transcription techniques used by Ralph Vaughan Williams in transcribing his works from SATB to TTBB. The culmination of this research is a transcription of Vaughan Williams's *Dona Nobis Pacem* for men's chorus and instrumental ensemble. This transcription adds to the men's choral repertoire and increases the work's accessibility for school and community choruses by creating a reduced accompaniment that maintains the flavor of the original orchestral instrumentation.

Review of Literature

The compositions of Ralph Vaughan Williams have been studied by many scholars. Several dissertations have focused on the suitability of particular Vaughan Williams's works for transcription for various voicings. In a strategy similar to that of my dissertation, Christina Laberge re-orchestrated the accompaniment of *Five Mystical Songs* for a small instrumental ensemble, thus making the work more accessible to smaller church choirs with limited budgets. Instead of using brass instruments, however, her transcription is written for strings, timpani and harp, with the organ covering the original brass parts. Unlike my project, her work deals only with re-voicing the instrumental parts. It does not make any changes to the vocal parts.

Similarly, J. Melvin Butler's dissertation, "Three Choral Works by Ralph Vaughan Williams Transcribed for Choir and Organ," aims to make three of Vaughan

Williams's works accessible for church choirs by transcribing the orchestration for organ. The selections include *Dona Nobis Pacem*, *Five Mystical Songs*, and *Benedicite*. While he, too, does not make any changes in the vocal parts, his insights into arranging for organ were very valuable.

In his dissertation, "An Analysis of the Wind Scoring Techniques of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Transcriptions of Selected Works for Various Wind Media," Douglas Allen Harris uses folk songs and works of Vaughan Williams to create three arrangements for brass choir, one for woodwind choir, and one for wind ensemble. He discusses Vaughan Williams's wind scoring techniques, in particular his use of folk song as the basis for his compositions.

Val Hicks's master's thesis, "Compositional Practices of Ralph Vaughan Williams as Revealed in Selected Choral Works," studies choral devices the composer applied in many of his choral works. While this document is helpful in analyzing Vaughan Williams's compositional style, it does not directly address his transcription philosophies and methods.

Dona Nobis Pacem has been the subject of three doctoral dissertations. Paul Krasnovsky created a comprehensive conductor's analysis of this work, which includes a detailed historical account and theoretical analysis. He discusses Vaughan Williams's choral works and how his views of nationalism in music and the use of folk songs influence his compositions. Krasnovsky's dissertation is a valuable resource for conductors programming *Dona Nobis Pacem*. Mark Lathan focuses exclusively on the text and purpose of *Dona Nobis Pacem* in his 2001 dissertation, "Emotional Progression in Sacred Choral Music: How Three Twentieth Century Masterworks Depict Grief in

Time of War, and *Song of Hope*, a Cantata for Chorus and Orchestra.” Paul David Chrysler’s dissertation from the University of Southern California is “A Study and Performance of Ralph Vaughan Williams’s *Dona Nobis Pacem*.”

While these documents certify the viability of Vaughan Williams’s works as research material, none of them cover the specific issues pertinent to men’s chorus transcriptions. In fact, there is little academic scholarship available on any men’s chorus topics. In one of the few studies available, Peter Pocock transcribes several of Hugo Wolf’s SATB arrangements for men’s chorus, and rearranges and edits a few of Wolf’s TTBB arrangements, creating performance editions. His dissertation, “The Choral Music of Hugo Wolf: A Discussion of the Musical and Textual Relationships with Performance Editions for Male Chorus,” includes a musical and textual analysis of a choral/orchestral work of Wolf and compares it to a list of Wolf’s solo voice motifs, created by another scholar, to discover if Wolf also used these specific motifs in this choral work.

Patrick Coyle, in his dissertation, “Significant Male Voice Repertory Commissioned by American Gay Men’s Choruses,” highlights the need for more male chorus repertoire and the subsequent commissioning of works by men’s choruses. However, he does not discuss transcriptions or techniques for arranging for men’s choral arranging.

Other transcription related scholarship includes dissertations by Robert Lynn and Nathaniel Johnson. Lynn presents a justification for creating tuba transcriptions from operatic arias and a list of considerations that should be addressed in making these

arrangements.² Johnson aims to increase accessibility of several works by transcribing the original orchestral accompaniment for wind ensemble in his dissertation, “Creation of Historically Informed Transcriptions for Chorus and Winds of Franz Schubert’s *Mass in G* and Gabriel Faure’s *Requiem*.” One of Johnson’s main goals is to create transcriptions that seek to maintain integrity to the composer’s original compositional practices. These transcriptions do not alter the SATB vocal parts, only the accompaniment.

Roy Douglas worked closely with Vaughan Williams for many years as a copyist and editor. In *Working with R.V.W.*, he offers valuable insight into the composer’s compositional process and philosophy on transcriptions. Two books by Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* and *A Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* provide chronological summaries of Vaughan Williams’s works. Vaughan Williams’s own discussion of his compositions and other topics can be found in two books: *Heirs and Rebels: Letters Written to Each Other and Occasional Writings on Music* and *National Music and Other Essays*. Many of the other available books on Ralph Vaughan Williams are biographical and do not focus extensively on his transcription techniques.

Arranging techniques for male chorus, in general, are rarely discussed in modern orchestration textbooks. Choral music is often excluded entirely. Three choral arranging textbooks, each of which includes valuable but brief discussions of men’s choral arranging are, *The Technique of Choral Composition*, by Archibald Davison (1946); *Choral Arranging*, by Hawley Ades (1966, 1983); and *Contemporary Choral Arranging*,

² Robert Lynn, “Guidelines for Transcribing Coloratura Opera Arias for Tuba, with Transcriptions of Three Arias by Vivaldi, Gluck, and Delibes” (DA diss., Ball State University, 2005).

by Arthur Ostrander and Dana Wilson (1986). The male chorus chapters in these books focus on general male chorus arranging techniques and do not cover specific issues in transcribing mixed octavos.

At the current time, there are few journal articles written about any men's choral topics, including transcription and arranging techniques. Jeremy Jones offers a three-part article in the *Choral Journal*, "A Brief Historical Overview of the European Tradition of Male Singing Societies and Their Influence on the Development of Collegiate Glee Clubs in America," which introduces the reader to male chorus transcriptions in the context of common repertoire practices. These articles are based on his doctoral dissertation from the University of Cincinnati.

In his article "The Use of the Organ Transcription in Choral-Orchestral Works" James Vail offers a reasoned argument for creating modern transcriptions of major choral works using a smaller instrumental ensemble and organ. He states these transcriptions can be performed by choirs with limited budgets, restricted performing spaces, or lack of enough singers to balance a full orchestra. He recommends using the organ to cover the wind parts and having a string ensemble perform with the chorus. Creating these transcriptions "can open up a wide repertoire of choral masterworks that are otherwise performed from time to time, if at all, only by symphony orchestras and symphonic choirs."³

In view of the limited materials available on men's choral arranging and transcription techniques found in textbooks and journal articles, this study will fill a need.

³ James Vail, "The Use of the Organ Transcription in Choral-Orchestral Works," *The American Organist* 34 (February 2000): 71.

I also hope that it will prove to be an impetus for more discussion about developing these specific choral arranging skills.

Methodology

I have analyzed and created an annotated list of common transcription techniques Ralph Vaughan Williams used in creating his TTBB arrangement of *Five Mystical Songs* based on his original SATB voicing. *Five Mystical Songs* is especially appropriate because it is a multiple-movement work for chorus, soloist, and orchestra, similar to *Dona Nobis Pacem*. In addition to studying the full score for this composition, preliminary research materials included a review of books, articles, and Vaughan Williams's own writings that discuss his defense of and use of transcriptions.

In writing my own transcription of *Dona Nobis Pacem*, I cited specific examples of the usage of his techniques. Of course, there were areas in *Dona Nobis Pacem* that are completely different from *Five Mystical Songs*, making it difficult to presume how he would have transcribed them. Portions of the arrangement were based on my own men's choral experience as a conductor, singer, and arranger.

In approaching this project, I anticipated possible obstacles that may be encountered. A men's chorus transcription project such as this presents several possible challenges to the arranger. How did Vaughan Williams voice the soprano and alto lines in his TTBB transcriptions? Did he simply take them down an octave, where they might become obscured by the lower voices? Did he keep the tenors in the same octave as the women's voices, encouraging the use of falsetto, when possible? Did he change the key of the arrangements to better fit the tessituras of men's voices? Did he maintain four-part

voicing throughout his transcriptions, or did he reduce the original harmony to two or three parts? How did he adapt the orchestration? Did he change instrumentation to better suit the range and timbre of men's voices, such as using English horn or viola instead of oboe or violin? My study addressed these issues, as well as other transcription challenges that arose.

One particularly challenging aspect of this transcription was creating an authentic organ part that captures the spirit of the original orchestration. In his 1975 doctoral dissertation, J. Melvin Butler transcribed the orchestral accompaniment of *Dona Nobis Pacem* for organ. Rather than attempt to recreate the scholarship of a professional organist and Vaughan Williams scholar, I use Butler's organ arrangement when appropriate. Since my accompaniment includes brass and percussion, the organ does not need to replicate these instruments. My organ part is mainly used to recreate the music originally played by the woodwind and string sections. I contacted Dr. Butler and received permission to use his work as the basis for the organ part in my arrangement. The insights provided from a professional organist proved very valuable. Several of his comments on organ registration for *Dona Nobis Pacem* are particularly pertinent, and I include them in appendix 1.

CHAPTER 2

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS AND HIS TRANSCRIPTION

TECHNIQUES FOR MEN'S CHORUS

Vaughan Williams's Philosophy on Transcriptions and His Music's Accessibility

Ralph Vaughan Williams was one of the most prominent British composers of the twentieth century, with a career spanning over sixty years. He mastered many musical genres and composed for both professional and amateur musicians. Thanks in no small part to his work, Britain regained a sense of musical identity and pride that had been obscured by the music of continental Europe. Finding inspiration for his music in English folksong and Elizabethan and Jacobean music, Vaughan Williams became a strong proponent for creating music that was distinctly English, rather than imitating foreign models. Like Béla Bartók, Jean Sibelius, and Zoltan Kodály, in their respective countries, he reached the collective British consciousness and created a sense of cultural identity in his music through the use of regional folksongs, which he researched and catalogued. In his Mary Flexner lectures, Vaughan Williams discusses the use of folksongs in his compositions:

What does this (English folksong) revival mean to the composer? It means that several of us found here in its simplest form the musical idiom which we were unconsciously cultivating ourselves, It gave a point to our imagination...the

knowledge of our folksongs did not so much discover for us something which had been hidden by foreign matter.⁴

While Vaughan Williams's music has a distinctly English flavor, showing the influence of his teachers, Hubert Parry, Charles Stanford, and Edward Elgar, he also studied and assimilated the music of Maurice Ravel, Claude Debussy, Igor Stravinsky, Béla Bartók, and Jean Sibelius. He frequently combines common tonality with modality and pentatonicism, using modes (especially the Dorian and Mixolydian) to "create chromatic elements without invoking their expressively charged functions as leading notes or appoggiaturas."⁵ Rhythmically, his music often seems unstable, with a mixture of duple and triple rhythms. His works showcase a variety of contrasts, and he often experiments with new and unique instruments, such as the saxophone and vibraphone.

Vaughan William's prodigious output includes nine symphonies, twenty-one other orchestral works, eleven compositions for brass or military bands, incidental music for eleven films, seven ballets or masques, thirty-nine works for chorus and orchestra, twenty-one collections of folksong and carol arrangements, and hundreds of folksongs, carol arrangements, and hymns. Although he was described as either an atheist or an agnostic, he spent considerable time editing the English hymnal and creating sacred music for congregational worship and civic activities. He composed chamber music, concertos, and instrumental solo music, in addition to many songs and song-cycles, duets, part-songs, and works for stage, including one opera. He also created arrangements and

⁴ Ralph Vaughan Williams, *National Music and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 41.

⁵ Alain Frogley, "Ralph Vaughan Williams" *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds. Stanley Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 26: 356.

editions of music of other composers, including Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, Henry Purcell, and Stephen Foster.

Vaughan Williams certainly composed exceptional music for professional singers and orchestras, but his complete oeuvre includes many pieces intended for enthusiastic amateurs.

He frequently wrote for special occasions, whether it was for a children's music festival, the lady factory workers' chorus competition, or some patriotic program on the British Broadcasting Corporation. So, a great amount of his choral music was composed to fit the special needs of a person, group, or occasion.⁶

He believed the true health and vitality of a country's national music would be seen not in the glittering, highly publicized events of the cosmopolitan elite, but rather in the activities of smaller, less glamorous, local musical endeavors. Throughout his life he remained true to this belief, conducting amateur musical groups and composing for them with the same intensity and earnestness which produced such works as the *Fourth Symphony* and *Job*.⁷

During World War I, in France, where he served as a wagon orderly and artillery officer, Vaughan Williams organized the troops' amateur music making. The impact of the war had a strong effect on his persona and influenced the philosophy that his compositions should be flexible, allowing for performance by ensembles with limited means. In a letter to his good friend Gustav Holst discussing music in wartime, Vaughan Williams asks,

How much does the artist owe to himself and how much to the community? Or, to put it another way, how far is it true that the artist in serving himself ultimately serves the community? ... The artist must condition his inspiration by the nature of his material. What will be the musical material on which the composer of the future can count? It will be no use writing elaborate orchestral pieces if there are no orchestras left to play them, or subtle string quartets if there are no subtle

⁶ Val Hicks, "Compositional Practices of Ralph Vaughan Williams as Revealed in Selected Choral Works" (MME thesis, University of Southern California, 1969), 24.

⁷ Paul Krasnovsky, "Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*, a Conductor's Analysis" (DM diss., Indiana University, 1977), 13.

instruments available. ... There will always remain for us the oldest and greatest of musical instruments, the human voice.⁸

He admired the German *Gesbrauchsmusik* movement and advocated for British composers to write music for amateurs, saying,

I should like to see this idea developed here—music for every fortuitous combination of instruments which may happen to be assembled in a parlour or a dug-out, with a part for anyone who happens to drop in. Why should we confine ourselves to the stereotyped string quartet or pianoforte trio? Why should the voice always be accompanied by the pianoforte? There seem to me great possibilities in voices and instruments in combinations. ... New material stimulates new ideas. Might not all these possibilities be a source of inspiration?⁹

Vaughan Williams argues that composers should strive to meet the demands of their audience, citing the English Madrigal School and comparing the need for casual music making in the Renaissance era to the needs of citizens in wartime Britain. While not as glamorous as writing for a symphony, he believed that “to write for the amateur may limit the scope, but it need not dim the inspiration of the composers.”¹⁰

Not only did he advocate writing music for amateurs, he championed altering his own compositions to fit the needs of the performers. Vaughan Williams biographer James Day states:

In nearly all his scores there is considerable provision for performance with smaller forces than those he originally envisaged. He used ‘cue’ notes to allow the works in question to be performed by smaller and therefore less expensive combinations than the ideal forces.

The mixture of integrity and respect for what is practicable shows itself throughout his music, with few exceptions. He never thought of music apart from performance and frequently said so. Amateurs, professionals, children and adults, the orthodox and the strange—all found him ready and willing to write for them. This in part explains his cavalier attitude to some of his own works, and his

⁸ Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Heirs and Rebels* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 91.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 92–3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 93.

willingness to rearrange them and revise them. Unlike many modern composers, he was willing to go much more than half way to meet his audience and did so without sacrificing his artistic integrity.¹¹

It was common for Vaughan Williams to have other composers arrange his works in order to meet the needs of the performance. Douglas cites, for example,

In 1945 he conducted a performance of *Thanksgiving for Victory* in Dorking Church, for which he probably used a different reduced version which he had earlier asked me to prepare. He had a lifelong affection for amateur choirs in small towns and villages, and liked to make his choral works available for them to perform. Experience had taught him that small towns can seldom afford to rustle up a body of string players, so he used to provide alternative versions of these works to make it possible to perform them in churches with strings and organ, plus any trumpets or timpani which might be around. The new version was sometimes prepared by V.W. himself, but more often—as in this instance—it was done by some other musician under his supervision.¹²

Vaughan Williams once asked Douglas to re-score another of his works, *Hodie*, for an average school orchestra because “I had an idea that this work is likely to become popular with school choral societies – but, as usual, I have made the orchestration (probably unnecessarily) elaborate and difficult.”¹³ Although Douglas declined to rearrange this piece, he makes the point that:

Orchestrations of already published music are not to be thought of as ‘tampering with unfinished works’: they are more to be classed with the orchestral versions which R.V.W. himself made of works by Meyerbeer and others—not to mention some of the very unconventional additions he made to some of Bach’s scores!¹⁴

Instrumental works transcribed by Vaughan Williams for new combinations of instruments include *Sea Songs* and *Fantasia on Greensleeves*. He originally composed two versions of *Sea Songs* in 1924 for military and brass bands. In 1943, he arranged the piece for full orchestra. In 1934, *Fantasia on Greensleeves* was adapted for strings and

¹¹ James Day, *Vaughan Williams* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1950), 83.

¹² *Ibid.*, 8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

harp with optional flute, from his opera *Sir John in Love*. He made subsequent transcriptions over the next thirteen years for piano solo, piano duet, two pianos, violin and piano, and cello and piano.

Vaughan Williams also frequently transcribed his vocal works for various ensembles with varying accompaniment options. “The Turtle Dove” was composed for male voices in 1919. Then he arranged it for mixed voices (SSATB) in 1924 and for unison voices with piano or orchestral accompaniment in 1934. During his career, he composed eight songs for both male and mixed voices. However, it was not always the mixed version that was created first. “Bushes and Briars,” “The Turtle Dove,” and “Mannin Veen” were all written for men’s voices initially, with the mixed versions following several years after. “Fain Would I Change that Note” and *Five Mystical Songs* were first scored for mixed chorus before being arranged for men. An SSA version of “Fain Would I Change that Note” was also arranged by the composer after the SATB piece had been penned.

Lending further support for this transcription project, the composer authorized and approved of several male chorus transcriptions of his mixed works created by Herbert Walker Pierce, an early twentieth-century British choral composer. Pierce’s TTBB transcriptions of *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, “Wassail Song,” and “Ca’ the Yowes” are included in Michael Kennedy’s definitive *Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*.

In the article “Vaughan Williams and his Interpreters” Adrian Boult writes that:

Vaughan Williams was one of the easier composers to please, not I think because his mind was not clear, but simply because he did not demand rigid adherence to any of his directions. He felt, I am sure, though he never would say so, that his

music was big enough to convey its message through a wide divergence of interpretations.¹⁵

Vaughan Williams seems to grant his blessing to diverse interpretations of his music when stating:

Art is a compromise between what we want to achieve and what circumstances allow us to achieve. It is out of these very compromises that the supreme art often springs; the highest comes when you least expect it. ... Great art often grows, by accident, while we think we are doing something else—often as a supply to meet demand.¹⁶

Five Mystical Songs – Background Information

Five Mystical Songs was composed in 1911 for baritone soloist, mixed chorus, and orchestra, with text by English poet, George Herbert. The first performance was given in Worcester Cathedral on 14 September 1911 at the Three Choirs Festival.

Vaughan Williams conducted the Festival Chorus and London Symphony Orchestra in the debut. The nineteen-minute work consists of five movements: “Easter,” “I Got Me Flowers,” “Love Bade Me Welcome,” “The Call,” and “Antiphon.”

In order to make his work accessible to more audiences, Vaughan Williams made an arrangement of *Five Mystical Songs* for baritone solo and piano and created a vocal transcription for men’s chorus. A publisher’s note in the TTBB score states:

In the years immediately before World War I, there still survived many male-voice English choirs which were heirs to the earlier glee club tradition. With his interest in amateur music making of the highest quality coupled with his university experience at Cambridge, the composer prepared this TTBB version around 1912.¹⁷

¹⁵ Adrian Boult, “Vaughan Williams and his Interpreters,” *The Musical Times* 113 (October 1972): 957–8.

¹⁶ Vaughan Williams, *Heirs and Rebels*, 92.

¹⁷ Editorial note, *Five Mystical Songs* (Boston: ECS Publishing, 1990), 2.

The men's arrangement can be performed with any of the accompaniment options available for mixed choruses.

James Day describes the work as Vaughan Williams's "earliest mature solo songs with orchestra" and notes that it was sharply criticized by some, including a young Benjamin Britten. Day suggests that Vaughan Williams maturation as a composer can be seen when comparing the *Five Mystical Songs* to the *Four Hymns* for tenor, viola, and orchestra from 1914.¹⁸

Musical criticism notwithstanding, *Five Mystical Songs* has remained popular with church choirs and college choirs. There are currently a variety of instrumental accompaniment options available, including organ, string quartet and piano, strings and organ, wind ensemble, and the traditional keyboard reduction. Solo arrangements of several of the movements are also available for various vocal ranges and for organ.

Five Mystical Songs - Transcription Techniques

In creating a men's chorus transcription of *Five Mystical Songs*, Vaughan Williams chooses a straightforward, almost literal, template that maintains the integrity of his original mixed composition. The arrangement was not shortened, simplified, or altered, save for the choral voicing. Although some composers will change keys when adapting an arrangement for men's voices to better fit the full spectrum of the male vocal range, Vaughan Williams uses the same keys and accompaniment options. This allows the TTBB transcription to be performed with full orchestra, organ, or any of the other variations available to SATB choirs. Other composers might have opted for a female

¹⁸ James Day, *Vaughan Williams* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 118–9.

voice to add contrast to the male singers, *à la* Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody*, but Vaughan Williams stays true to his original inspiration and left the baritone solo unchanged.

In adapting the choral voicing from SATB to TTBB, Vaughan Williams condenses the vocal score into the men's vocal ranges but does not alter much of the overall texture of the piece. Except for a few cases, he does not eliminate chord members or entire vocal lines to avoid creating a "muddy" sound, which sometimes occurs when tight harmony is augmented with the rich overtones of a male chorus. One of the spots where he does alter the vocal parts and reduce the texture slightly was in "Antiphon," mm. 67–68 (Example 1). Rather than recreate the stepwise lines in the alto, tenor, and bass parts, he has the men's chorus singing the soprano line down an octave, in unison. This strategy allows the listener to focus on the main motive.

Example 1: *Five Mystical Songs*, "Antiphon," mm. 67–68

a. SATB original

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is for measures 67 and 68. The lyrics are 'Let all the world in'. The Soprano part has a melodic line with a half note on 'world' and a quarter note on 'in'. The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts follow a similar pattern but are lower in pitch. The Alto and Tenor parts have a half note on 'world' and a quarter note on 'in'. The Bass part has a half note on 'world' and a quarter note on 'in'. The Soprano part has a half note on 'world' and a quarter note on 'in'.

67

SOPRANO

Let all the world in

ALTO

Let all the world in

TENOR

Let all the world in

BASS

Let all the world in

Example 1, cont.

b. TTBB transcription

The image shows a musical score for a four-part men's chorus (TTBB) transcription. The score is for measures 67 through 71. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The parts are labeled TENOR 1, TENOR 2, BASS 1, and BASS 2. The lyrics are 'Let all the world in'. The melody is homophonic, with all voices moving in parallel motion. The notes are: Tenors (G4, A4, B4, C5, D5), Bass 1 (G3, A3, B3, C4, D4), and Bass 2 (F3, G3, A3, B3, C4). The lyrics are placed below the notes: 'Let' under G, 'all' under A, 'the' under B, 'world' under C, and 'in' under D.

Like many of Vaughan William's vocal compositions written during this period, the choral writing in *Five Mystical Songs* is predominantly homophonic. In the mixed version, he occasionally varies the texture from four voices to two voices. For example, in "Antiphon," mm. 34–40, the sopranos and tenors present a seven-measure theme that is answered by the altos and basses. The change in tone color between the higher voices and lower voices creates interest. In the TTBB version, he begins the phrase with the tenors and ends with the basses, still allowing for a contrast of timbres.

Because the men's chorus arrangement of *Five Mystical Songs* is so similar to the mixed version and mostly involves switching the vocal lines to different parts, the most productive way to analyze his transcription techniques is to observe the note changes for each vocal part. To avoid confusion, I will identify vocal parts in the men's arrangement as T1 (for tenor 1), T2 (for tenor 2), B1 (for bass 1/baritone) and B2 (for bass). Vocal

parts from the mixed arrangement will be labeled with their full names: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. If a part from the SATB score was written down an octave, the abbreviation for *ottava bassa*, 8^{vb}, will be used (i.e. – alto sung down an octave will be written alto 8^{vb}).

The B2 part is almost always the same as the bass in the SATB version. Only three times in the arrangement did he have B2 sing a completely different note, borrowing once each, from the original soprano, alto, and tenor harmonies. Several other times he expanded the tonal palate downward by having B2 sing the original bass part 8^{vb} (Example 2).

Example 2: *Five Mystical Songs*, “Antiphon,” mm. 69–76

a. SATB original

69

Bass

ev - ery cor - ner sing, _____ My God__ and King.____

b. TTBB transcription

69

TENOR 1

ev - ery cor - ner sing, _____ My God__ and King.____

TENOR 2

ev - ery cor - ner sing, _____ My God__ and King.____

BASS 1

ev - ery cor - ner sing, _____ My God__ and King.____

BASS 2

ev - ery cor - ner sing, _____ My God__ and King.____

The next most predictable technique he employs is having T1 sing the soprano line 8^{vb}, often retaining the melody in the top voice. There are several places where he has T1 sing the alto part, in the original octave, or tenor part. However, these variances are brief, lasting only a few measures before returning to the soprano line 8^{vb}. For example, T1 sings the alto part in “Easter,” mm. 77–78, before returning to the soprano 8^{vb} on beat two of m. 79 (Example 3).

Example 3: *Five Mystical Songs*, “Easter,” mm. 77–82

a. SATB original

77

Soprano

bless-ed Spir - it bear a part, with his sweet art.

Alto

bless-ed Spir - it bear a part, with his sweet art.

b. TTBB transcription

77

TENOR 1

8

bless-ed Spir - it bear a part, with his sweet art.

The T2 and B1 parts are less predictable, weaving between vocal lines as circumstances require. Usually, T2 will be singing the alto part 8^{vb} or the tenor. These are sometimes spliced together consecutively. This is demonstrated in “Antiphon,” when the

T2 part moves from alto 8^{vb} in mm. 26–30, to tenor in mm. 34–54, and back to alto 8^{vb} in mm. 55–59 (Example 4).

Example 4: *Five Mystical Songs*, “Antiphon,” mm. 50–57

a. SATB original

50
ALTO
Let all the world

TENOR
8
Let all the world Let all the

54
in ev-er-y cor-ner sing,
world in ev-er-y cor-ner sing,

b. TTBB transcription

50
TENOR 2
8
Let all the world Let all the world in ev-er-y cor-ner sing,

The B1 part often sings alto 8^{vb} (ex. – “Antiphon,” mm. 82–102), tenor (ex. – “Easter,” mm. 64–66), or tenor 8^{vb} (ex. – “Antiphon,” mm. 70–77). When the original bass part divides, B1 sings the upper bass part. They also join B2 in unison for several phrases.

As discussed, most of the transcription was accomplished through a straightforward switching of parts, in either small or large chunks. However, Vaughan

Williams occasionally composed a new line that uses notes from several parts. For example, the B1 part in “Antiphon,” mm. 67–72, includes pitches from the soprano, alto, and tenor parts (Example 5).

Example 5: *Five Mystical Songs*, “Antiphon,” mm. 67–71

a. SATB original

67

SOPRANO

Let all the world in ev - ery cor - ner sing,

ALTO

Let all the world in ev - ery cor - ner sing,

TENOR

Let all the world in ev - ery cor - ner sing,

8

Detailed description: This block contains the SATB original musical score for measures 67-71 of 'Antiphon'. It features three staves: Soprano (treble clef), Alto (treble clef), and Tenor (treble clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are 'Let all the world in ev - ery cor - ner sing,'. The Soprano part starts on a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and a dotted half note C5. The Alto part starts on a half note E4, followed by quarter notes F4, G4, and a dotted half note A4. The Tenor part starts on a half note C4, followed by quarter notes D4, E4, and a dotted half note F4. The measure numbers 67, 68, 69, 70, and 71 are indicated above the staves.

b. TTBB transcription

67

BASS 1

Let all the world in ev - ery cor - ner sing,

Detailed description: This block contains the TTBB transcription musical score for measure 67 of 'Antiphon'. It features a single staff for Bass 1 (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are 'Let all the world in ev - ery cor - ner sing,'. The melody starts on a half note G2, followed by quarter notes A2, B2, and a dotted half note C3. The measure number 67 is indicated above the staff.

In “I Got Me Flowers,” mm. 33–36, the top three parts all have lines that juxtapose pitches from several voices with new notes to create new, flowing melodic lines that work well for the men’s voices (Example 6).

Example 6: *Five Mystical Songs*, “I Got Me Flowers,” mm. 33–36

a. SATB original

33

SOPRANO (humming tone) *

ALTO (humming tone) *

TENOR (humming tone) *

BASS (humming tone) *

The SATB original score for measures 33–36 of “I Got Me Flowers” from *Five Mystical Songs*. The score is written for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass voices. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is a simple, repetitive line of eighth and quarter notes. The Soprano part begins with a whole rest in measure 33, followed by a half note in measure 34, and then a series of eighth and quarter notes in measures 35 and 36. The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts follow a similar pattern, with the Bass part starting with a whole rest in measure 33 and then entering in measure 34. The score is marked with a “(humming tone) *” for each part.

b. TTBB transcription

33

TENOR 1 (humming tone) *

TENOR 2 (humming tone) *

BASS 1 (humming tone) *

BASS 2 (humming tone) *

The TTBB transcription of measures 33–36 of “I Got Me Flowers” from *Five Mystical Songs*. The score is written for Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass 1, and Bass 2. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is a simple, repetitive line of eighth and quarter notes. The Tenor 1 part begins with a whole rest in measure 33, followed by a half note in measure 34, and then a series of eighth and quarter notes in measures 35 and 36. The Tenor 2, Bass 1, and Bass 2 parts follow a similar pattern, with the Bass 1 part starting with a whole rest in measure 33 and then entering in measure 34. The score is marked with a “(humming tone) *” for each part.

The following chart summarizes the main transcription techniques that Vaughan Williams utilized in creating his men’s arrangement of *Five Mystical Songs*:

Table 1: Male Chorus Transcription Techniques of Ralph Vaughan Williams
(Based on his TTBB transcription of *Five Mystical Songs*)

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Abbreviation Key:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Vocal parts in the TTBB transcription are identified by their first initial and number (T1 = tenor 1, T2 = tenor 2, B1 = baritone, B2 = bass) Vocal parts from the original SATB composition are identified by their complete name. (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) $\downarrow 8^{vb}$ = <i>ottava bassa</i>, notes are one octave below original part, ex. - S$\downarrow 8^{vb}$ = new notes are one octave below original soprano part 	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>B2 : Bass Procedures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B2 part is almost always the <u>same</u> as the original Bass line Occasionally, B2 sings Bass $\downarrow 8^{vb}$ 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>T1 : Tenor I Procedures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T1 usually recreates the original Soprano $\downarrow 8^{vb}$. This gives them the melody most of the time. T1 occasionally sings the Alto or Tenor parts, in the original range
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>B1 : Baritone Procedures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing Alto $\downarrow 8^{vb}$ Sing Tenor $\downarrow 8^{vb}$ or at original pitch Sing the Bass 1 part when original part divided 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>T2 : Tenor 2 Procedures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing original Tenor part Sing Alto $\downarrow 8^{vb}$ T2 briefly sings other parts
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Other Transcription Techniques</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compose new line which juxtaposes notes from two or more parts Keep contrast between women's vs. men's voices or high voices vs. low voices (soprano & tenor vs. alto & bass) by using the T1 & T2 voices vs. B1 & B2. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Structural Issues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No key changes No structural changes (number of measures, changes in harmony) Vocal lines are generally traded between parts for several measures, a complete phrase, or for most of the movement. Keep accompaniment options and solos the same

A complete transcription chart that identifies how Vaughan Williams utilized his original SATB vocal lines when making his TTBB version of *Five Mystical Songs* is available in Appendix I.

Vaughan Williams composed *Five Mystical Songs* fairly early in his career, during a time Hugh Ottaway describes as the composer's second compositional phase, from 1908–1914.¹⁹ He was quite active in choral composition during this period, especially with the creation of *a cappella* folksong arrangements. This was also the time when he composed most of his men's choral arrangements. However, it is important to remember that his style developed greatly throughout his sixty-plus year career and he would constantly revise his works. The transcription techniques he used in the 1912 version of *Five Mystical Songs* provide an apt starting point for transcribing other Vaughan Williams works. However, arranging larger works composed later in his career, such as *Dona Nobis Pacem* presents additional challenges that need to be addressed appropriately. The overall goal, I believe, remains the same: to create a transcription that maintains the flavor and integrity of the original composition.

¹⁹ Hugh Ottaway, "Ralph Vaughan Williams," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds. Stanley Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 26: 347–48.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE ‘*DONA NOBIS PACEM*’ TRANSCRIPTION PROCESS

Background Information

Vaughan Williams composed the cantata *Dona Nobis Pacem* in 1936 for the centenary of the Huddersfield Choral Society. It is written for soprano and baritone soli, SATB chorus, and orchestra. Optional accompaniment by strings and piano is available. In addition, as part of his doctoral dissertation, J. Melvin Butler created a version for chorus and organ in 1975. *Dona Nobis Pacem* is considered a pivotal pre-World War II work that offered a cry for hope and peace amidst the beating drums of war. While war-inspired works are sometimes criticized as mere propaganda and easily forgotten, Vaughan Williams’s message of peace has endured and inspired future generations.

The powerful message of peace and hope was one reason I chose *Dona Nobis Pacem* for transcription. Great works often capture important moments in history in a tangible way, preserving the feelings of a generation in music. Vaughan Williams aptly portrays the pre-World War II atmosphere of angst in society, strongly warns against the devastation of war, and offers hope for peace. Unfortunately, this message is not outdated. More than sixty years later, the drumbeats of war are ever present in our world. It is my hope that bringing *Dona Nobis Pacem* to new audiences can inspire peace for a new generation.

Also paramount in my choosing this piece for transcription was the desire to add a major work with brass to the men's choral repertoire. I found great inspiration in community chorus inspired TTBB and brass arrangements of John Rutter's *Gloria*, Randol Alan Bass's *Gloria*, and "Sanctus" from Maurice Duruflé's *Requiem*. The brilliance and power created by combining a brass ensemble with men's voices is exciting.

Gustav Holst's setting of *A Dirge for Two Veterans* for TTBB chorus and brass ensemble also kindled my imagination. When performing the Holst arrangement many years ago, I was struck by the poignancy of Walt Whitman's poetry. However, something about the piece seemed a bit hollow and unrealized, in my opinion. When I heard a performance of Vaughan Williams's setting of the poem years later, it struck me that he had more fully captured the true passion and scope of the text and elevated its resonance by surrounding it with complementary movements accompanied by a full orchestra. Although still using a great deal of homophonic material, he varied the texture much more than Holst. I was contemplative and intrigued by the Holst version, but was enraptured with Vaughan Williams's.

Indeed, Holst and Vaughan Williams shared a strong past together as colleagues, friends, and confidants. They frequently shared their compositions and offered critiques of each other's works. Whitman's poetry was also of interest to them both. They each created compositions using Whitman's "Toward the Unknown Region" in 1924, with Vaughan Williams claiming that the two of them engaged in a friendly contest to see who

could create the best musical setting of the poem. He said that they both agreed that he had won.²⁰

It is interesting to note that Vaughan Williams originally composed “A Dirge for Two Veterans” as an individual piece in 1911. However, he kept it in a drawer, unperformed, until he included it in *Dona Nobis Pacem* in 1936. Gustav Holst and Charles Wood, Vaughan Williams’s former teacher, published their own arrangements of Whitman’s “A Dirge for Two Veterans” in 1914 and 1901, respectively. Vaughan Williams scholar, Michael Kennedy speculates “It is likely, although he never would have admitted it, that Vaughan Williams suppressed his own setting (of ‘Dirge’) in deference to Wood and to Holst.”²¹

Vaughan Williams cantata, *Dona Nobis Pacem*, is divided into five movements, of which “A Dirge for Two Veterans” is the longest. In choosing text for this work, he innovatively juxtaposed the poetry of Walt Whitman with text from the Latin *Mass* and a political speech by John Bright, which was delivered in the British House of Commons. While the text in the score is referenced as six separate sections, in the music, the last two sections are run together. For the sake of this document, I will also combine the last two sections into one final movement, “Movement V.”

While the cantata was generally well received and remains popular with choirs today, the two main criticisms leveled at it are: the imbalance of the movements, with “A Dirge for Two Veterans” dominating the work, and the propagandistic nature of the work’s anti-war message. Frank Howes acknowledges these aspersions by stating:

²⁰ Day, *Vaughan Williams*, 125.

²¹ Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), 163.

If *Dona Nobis Pacem* fails artistically it is not for its tractarian character but rather because it is not a completely realized unity. It is a compilation of pieces written at two different periods but strung together on the thread provided by the title, ‘Give peace in our time, O Lord’, which is reiterated incessantly by the soprano soloist. This is not to deny that the central idea is strong enough to unify the component ideas of war, reconciliation, mourning, and the conquest of fear, only to doubt whether the internal balance and proportion are quite what they would have been had the work been designed in its entirety before any of the music was composed.²²

Howes also notes, while some people believe propaganda and art to be incompatible, Vaughan Williams did not hold that view. Vaughan Williams’s artistic creed was that “he must make his art an expression of the whole life of the community.”²³ The passionate call for peace espoused in *Dona Nobis Pacem* was certainly shared by many other British citizens at the time, and it is still relevant many years later.

Analysis of the Transcription Process

In *Vaughan Williams and His Interpreters*, Sir Adrian Boult espouses that:

The interpreter of Vaughan Williams need not feel too closely tied up to the details of the score. His ambition should be directed towards the structure of the music, the inevitability of its rise and fall, to its underlying moods and the glowing force of the messages. Above all he should aim to convey to his audience the power and integrity of its inspiration.²⁴

My primary goal in creating the TTBB transcription of *Dona Nobis Pacem* was to maintain the integrity of the composer’s original work as much as possible. Semantically, ‘arrangement’ and ‘transcription’ are terms often used interchangeably. *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* defines an ‘arrangement’ as:

²² Frank Howes, *The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 166.

²³ Ibid., 165–66.

²⁴ Boult, “Vaughan Williams and His Interpreters,” 958.

The adaptation of a composition for a medium different from that for which it was originally composed, usually with the intention of preserving the essentials of the musical substance; also the result of such a process of adaptation. ... The terms transcribe and transcription are sometimes used interchangeably with arrange and arrangement. Often, however, the former imply the greater fidelity to the original.²⁵

I purposefully use the term ‘transcription’ to describe this work because of my intent to be faithful to the original.

Transcribing the men’s vocal parts from the original SATB work was a fairly straightforward process using many of Vaughan Williams’s own transcription techniques. Addressing structural issues the same way as Vaughan Williams, there are no changes in keys, harmony, solos or length of the piece. While I have added an additional reduced accompaniment for brass septet, organ, and percussion, all of the previous accompaniment options for *Dona Nobis Pacem* will still work with my transcription. It could be performed with full orchestra, Vaughan Williams’s reduced orchestration marked in the score, his arrangement for strings and piano, or Melvin Butler’s organ accompaniment.

The vocal lines are generally traded between parts in the transcription. These straightforward vocal line switches can last for several measures, a complete phrase, or for most of the movement. The B2 part is almost always the same as the original bass line. However, in “Movement V,” I took B2 down an octave from bass part in mm. 131–140 because the original line was a bit high and moving it down an octave expanded the tonal palette. This also allows the bass part to be more distinct in this polyphonic section (Example 7).

²⁵ *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., s.v. “Arrangement.”

Example 7: *Dona Nobis Pacem*, "Movement V," mm. 131–140

a. SATB original

131

BASS

And they shall come and see my glo-ry. And I will set a sign

136

a-mong them, and they shall de-clare my glo - ry, my glo - ry

b. TTBB transcription

131

TENOR 1

tongues. And they shall come and see my glo - ry. And it will

TENOR 2

tongues. And they shall come and see my glo - ry. I will

BASS 1

tongues. And they shall come and see my glo - ry. I will

BASS 2

And they shall come and see my glo-ry. And I will set a sign.

136

set a sign a - mong them, and they shall de-clare my glo - ry

set a sign a - mong them, they shall de- clare my glo ry

set a sign a - mong them, they shall de- clare my glo ry

a - mong them. and they shal de-clare my glo - ry, my glo - ry

Another change I made was having B2 sing tenor 8^{vb} in “Movement V,” mm. 123–127, bringing out this motive while T1 and T2 are singing the women’s parts (Example 8).

Example 8: *Dona Nobis Pacem*, “Movement V,” mm. 123–127

a. SATB original

123

SOPRANO
sem - bled; and let them hear. And it shall

ALTO
sem - bled; and let them hear. And it shall

TENOR
bled; and let them hear, and say, it is the truth.

BASS
And it shall come,

b. TTBB transcription

123

TENOR 1
sem - bled; and let them hear. And it shall

TENOR 2
sem - bled; and let them hear. And it shall *mf cresc.*

BASS 1
bled; And it shall come,

BASS 2
and let them hear, and say, it is the truth.

The T1 line usually recreates the original soprano line down an octave. This gives them the melody most of the time. I had T1 occasionally sing tenor or alto in the original octave. In “Movement I,” mm. 29–40, when the sopranos tacet, I had T1 sing the alto 1 part. The original soprano entrance in m. 37 was taken down an octave and given to T2. In “A Dirge for Two Veterans,” I moved T1 to the alto line in mm. 76–85, keeping the melody on top. The soprano obligato was taken down an octave and given to B1 (Example 9).

Example 9: *Dona Nobis Pacem*, “A Dirge for Two Veterans,” mm. 76–80

a. SATB original

The musical score for SATB original, measures 76–80, is presented in four staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The Soprano part begins in measure 76 with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4 and a whole note G4. The Alto part begins in measure 76 with a whole rest, followed by a half note F4, a quarter note E4, and a half note D4. The Tenor part begins in measure 78 with a half note G3, a quarter note F3, and a half note E3. The Bass part begins in measure 78 with a half note D3, a quarter note C3, and a half note B2. The lyrics are: "The son is brought with the fa - - - ther, they fell, fa - ther, In the fore-most ranks of the fierce as-sault they fell,"

76

SOPRANO

ALTO

78

The son

For the son is brought with the

the fa - - - ther, they fell,

fa - ther, In the fore-most ranks of the fierce as-sault they fell,

Example 9, cont.

b. TTBB transcription

76
TENOR 1
8
For the son is brought with the

BASS 1
The son

78
8
fa - ther, In the fore - most ranks of the fierce as-sault they fell,
the fa - - - ther, they_ fell,

In “Movement V,” mm. 89–111, T1 sings the original tenor. Also in this movement, T1 sings tenor in mm. 206–210 because this part is pitched higher than the soprano sung down an octave.

T2 often sings the tenor part or alto 8^{vb} . “Movement II,” mm. 6–41, “Reconciliation,” mm. 29–34 and mm. 52–67, and “A Dirge for Two Veterans,” mm. 76–85, are all places where T2 sings tenor. In “Dirge,” mm. 111–129 and “Movement V,” mm. 95–105 and 120–142, T2 sings alto 8^{vb} . However, in the latter section, the ‘a’ in mm. 124–126 would be too low for T2 if sung an octave below the alto part, so I kept that note in the original octave.

Like T2, B1 often sings alto 8^{vb} or tenor. In “Movement V,” mm. 106–117 and mm. 165–181, B1 sings alto 8^{vb} . They also sing alto 8^{vb} in “A Dirge for Two Veterans,” mm. 62–74, and in “Reconciliation,” mm. 52–67, except for an important three-note

motive included from the original baritone line in m. 61. During several phrases, B1 sings the tenor line, including “Movement I,” mm. 29–42, and “Movement V,” mm. 118–123. Several bars later, in the fifth movement, mm. 128–140, the tenor tessitura is quite high, so I had B1 sing tenor 8^{vb}.

As Vaughan Williams did in *Five Mystical Songs*, I also created new lines that juxtaposed notes and short musical lines from several parts. For example, in “Movement II,” mm. 69–78, T2 includes measures from alto (mm. 69–73), soprano 8^{vb} (mm. 74–75), alto 8^{vb} (mm. 77–78) (Example 10).

Example 10: *Dona Nobis Pacem*, “Movement II” mm. 69–78

a. SATB original

69

SOPRANO

Mind not the tim - id. mind not the weep-er or pray-er,

ALTO

Mind not the tim - id. mind not

TENOR

Mind mind not the tim-id, mind not Mind not the

BASS

Mind not mind not mind not Mind not the

74

mind not nor the mo-ther's en- trea - ties,

Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mo-ther's en- trea - ties,

old man be-seech-ing the young man, mind not, mind not,

old man be-seech-ing the young man, mind not, mind not,

Example 10, cont.

b. TTBB transcription

TENOR 2

69

8

Mind not the tim - id. mind not

74

8

mind not nor the mo-ther's en - trea - ties,

When creating the transcription I analyzed each phrase and tried to create the most logical lines, keeping entire vocal lines intact when possible, but switching to other parts due to consideration of vocal range and harmonic structure. Many of the techniques I used were the same as Vaughan Williams used in *Five Mystical Songs*, but the added length and complexity of *Dona Nobis Pacem* necessitated the use of additional arranging tactics.

There were times in the arrangement when voicing the chords took precedence over copying an exact vocal line from another part. In negotiating these areas, I strived to include all chord members while maintaining a logical stepwise progression and keeping the pitches within each section's tessitura. "Reconciliation" was particularly challenging because it contains much *divisi*, so I had to decide when to divide the male voices and when to leave out less important harmonies and lines. The first change I usually made was removing notes that were doubled in the original. Then I tried to keep the *divisi* if it fit the vocal line. Beginning in m. 52, Vaughan Williams switched from four parts to seven-part *divisi*, SSAATBB. Some of the lines contained similar rhythms and notes, so I

pared them down appropriately. For example, the soprano 2 and tenor were nearly identical, so I eliminated the soprano 2 part. Bass 1 and bass 2 were similar, so I did not use the bass 1 part (Example 11).

Example 11: *Dona Nobis Pacem*, “Reconciliation,” mm. 52–56

a. SATB original

52

Soprano 1: Word o - ver all, beau - - - ti - ful as the sky,

Soprano 2: Word o - ver all, beau-ti - ful as the sky, Beau-ti - ful that

Alto 1 & 2: Word o - ver all, beau - - - ti - ful as the sky,

Tenor 1 & 2: Word o - ver all, beau-ti - ful as the sky, Beau-ti - ful that

Bass 1: Word o - ver all, Beau - - - ti - ful that

Bass 2: Word o - ver all, Beau - - - ti - ful that

55

Beau - - - ti - ful that war

war and all its deeds of car - nage must in time be

that war must in time

war and all its deeds of car - nage must in time be

war must in time

war must in time

Example 11, cont.

b. TTBB transcription

52

TENOR 1

Word o-ver all, beau - - ti-ful as the sky, _____

TENOR 2

Word o-ver all, beau-ti-ful as the sky, beau-ti-ful_ that

BASS 1

Word o-ver all, beau - - ti-ful as the sky, _____

BASS 2

Word o-ver all, beau - - - ti-ful that

55

beau - - - ti - ful that war_____

war and all its deeds of car - nage_ must in time be

that war must in time

war must in time

There were several sections in *Dona Nobis Pacem* that could be sung at pitch with men's voices because the sopranos were either not singing, or they were in their low range, which the tenors can match. When these circumstances arose, I chose to keep the original chords intact with the tenors taking the top line. If there were more than four parts, then I used *divisi* to keep the original harmonies. Examples of this are in the first movement, mm. 29–36, and fifth movement, mm. 240–248 (Example 12).

Example 12: *Dona Nobis Pacem*, “Movement I,” mm. 33–36

a. SATB original

The musical score is for SATB voices in 3/4 time, measures 33-36. The Soprano part is silent, indicated by a whole rest in each measure. The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts sing the lyrics "pa - cem, pa - cem. do - na no - bis". The Alto and Tenor parts have a melodic line, while the Bass part provides a harmonic foundation with sustained notes and a final long note in measure 36. The lyrics are written below the notes.

33

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

pa - cem, pa - cem. do - na no - bis

pa - cem, pa - cem, pa - -

pa - cem, pa - cem, pa - -

Example 12, cont.

b. TTBB transcription

The image shows a musical score for four voices: TENOR 1, TENOR 2, BASS 1, and BASS 2. The score is in 3/4 time and begins at measure 33. The lyrics are 'pa - cem, pa - cem, do - na no - bis'. The notation includes treble clefs for the tenors and bass clefs for the basses. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables across measures. The score is a transcription of a vocal part, likely from a larger work.

Other times, reducing the voices was extremely easy because Vaughan Williams doubled the women's and men's voices, so I left out the soprano and alto parts. This can be observed in "Movement I," mm. 20–23.

The end result of the men's vocal writing, I hope, leaves the singers with flowing, dynamic parts that greatly resemble the original composition. I believe that this arrangement aptly captures the flavor of Vaughan Williams's work and will be exciting for men's choruses to perform.

As previously mentioned, any of the current accompaniment options available for *Dona Nobis Pacem* will work with the men's vocal arrangement. However, a secondary goal of my transcription was to create a new accompaniment option that features the power of a brass ensemble and percussion with men's voices. Vaughan Williams's attitude towards the flexibility and accessibility of his compositions leads me to believe

that he would approve these changes. In fact Vaughan Williams encountered times when he needed to reduce the number of instrumentalists, saying:

Many conductors with limited orchestral resources when dealing with modern works are under the painful necessity of dispensing with the ‘extra’ instruments; they must either leave them out altogether or write them in for some other instrument. I have lately had to do both with Wagner and Elgar. I have found that with Wagner the extra instruments could almost always be dispensed with altogether, with a little loss of colour, it’s true, but with no damage to the texture.²⁶

The brass arrangement I created for this transcription is scored for two B-flat trumpets, two French horns, two tenor trombones, and one tuba. Because limiting orchestral costs was a goal, I originally considered using a brass quartet or quintet. However, after consulting with Dr. Paul Droste, Professor Emeritus at The Ohio State University, a noted brass ensemble expert and Vaughan Williams aficionado, I decided to write for brass septet. Droste’s advice was to use as many brass players as possible to truly capture the full dynamic range of the work. While using the full regiment of brass in the orchestral score would have been spectacular, and the piece could still work today with original brass instrumentation, my concern for overbalancing a small to mid-size men’s chorus with more than seven brass players, in addition to the organ and percussion and controlling the costs of additional instrumentalists, contributed to my scaling the brass down to a septet.

Vaughan Williams’s original brass instrumentation included four B-flat trumpets, four tenor trombones, four horns in F, bass trombone, and tuba. Two of the trumpets and trombones are marked *ad lib.* and can be easily dismissed. In addition to these four *ad lib.* parts, I reduced the horns to two players and eliminated the bass trombone. At first

²⁶ Vaughan Williams, *National Music and Other Essays*, 250.

glance, the tuba might seem a logical choice to be cut before the bass trombone, since it was included in fewer places, but I felt the resonant tones and color of this instrument were vital to maintaining a solid brass sound. In places where both instruments were not playing, I often had the tuba play the bass trombone part.

If you have a men's chorus of at least 150 voices and a capable pipe organ, I believe you could use Vaughan Williams's original brass instrumentation with great success. The primary challenges with this approach would be to avoid overpowering the chorus and achieving an acceptable balance with the organ, which is replacing the string and woodwind parts.

An important tenet of my reduced instrumentation was to include percussion in order to fully capture the rhythmic vitality of the piece. Many reduced orchestrations eliminate percussion, to the detriment of the arrangement, in my opinion. Percussion instruments used in my transcription are timpani, bass drum, snare drum, cymbal, tam-tam, triangle, glockenspiel, and chimes. Keeping in mind budgetary constraints, my arrangement may be performed using two percussionists, but a third player is ideal to allow for a fuller climax in "Movement V," with the timpani, chimes, and glockenspiel playing together. Roy Douglas recalls when Vaughan Williams wrote his Eighth Symphony, he included tuned gongs, tubular bells, and vibraphone, saying, "I rather feel the more the merrier." He also mentioned that the tuned gongs "are not absolutely essential, but their inclusion is highly desirable."²⁷ The extra percussion instruments in this *Dona Nobis Pacem* transcription are not all essential, but I do consider them highly

²⁷Douglas, *Working with R.V.W.*, 43–4.

desirable. Today's professional, collegiate, and even high-school percussionists are adept at manipulating a variety of instruments in bringing a piece to life.

With brass and percussion present, the organ is assigned the task of covering the woodwind, string, and original organ parts. It might have been more practical to use a piano, since many performance spaces do not have any organ, let alone an adequate one, available. After all, Vaughan Williams did approve of *Dona Nobis Pacem* being performed with strings and piano. However, I believe use of a quality organ best balances the brass, percussion, and men's voices while most effectively replacing the string and woodwind sections. J. Melvin Butler discusses the use of organ transcriptions in Vaughan Williams's works:

Vaughan Williams choral accompaniments are particularly well suited for organ, for in these works he seldom uses more than three-part counterpoint and relies heavily on large blocks of contrasting instrumental color. In practically all cases, the pedals can successfully carry the bass line since it is seldom too active, leaving the hands free to play the remaining parts on contrasting manuals. (This cannot be duplicated in a piano reduction since the left hand plays the important bass line.) These contrasting timbres, so often found in Vaughan Williams's orchestrations, can usually be duplicated on most organs.²⁸

I created the organ part for this transcription by adapting an organ arrangement of *Dona Nobis Pacem* by J. Melvin Butler. As part of his 1975 D.M.A. dissertation, Butler transcribed his organ arrangement from the full score for performance with choir, organ, and optional timpani. He is an accomplished organist and composer, and I felt it congruous to use his organ arrangement as the basis for my own, with his permission. In creating the organ part for this transcription I began with Butler's arrangement and removed the sections that doubled the brass. This technique basically left the organ

²⁸ J. Melvin Butler, "Three Choral Works by Ralph Vaughan Williams Transcribed for Choir and Organ" (DMA diss., Eastman School of Music, 1975), v.

covering the string, woodwind, and original organ parts. Other than these reductions, the organ part is virtually identical to his 1975 version. I made a conscious decision to honor his work and maintain integrity to his original arrangement.

Due to the variance in organ quality and registration, I realize that the organ cannot necessarily provide accurate substitutions for the orchestral instruments. However, the goal should be to provide similar and characteristic voices in their places. Therefore, instead of noting specific registrations in the organ part, written cues are provided, indicating the orchestral part from which each section is drawn. This allows the organist and conductor to select registrations that best fit the flexibility and capacity of the organ being used and most accurately reflect the original orchestration. Suggested registration and dynamic markings come directly from Butler's organ arrangement. In Appendix I, I have included specific registration advice, written by Butler, which should prove valuable for organists performing this transcription.

The organ part in this transcription is challenging, but it is created with the trained organist in mind and the goal of maintaining the greatest integrity to the original score. Organists should feel free to adapt the organ part to best fit their instruments and capabilities. Kenneth Shenton notes that "Vaughan Williams was always more concerned with whether his organ music was playable rather than with questions of correct organ style, part-writing, etc... 'never mind if it is well written: can it be played'?"²⁹

The strength of a brass septet, organ, and percussion can easily overpower a chorus, so it is important to have the instrumentalists use restraint to avoid this problem.

²⁹ Kenneth Shenton, "Ralph Vaughan Williams: His Attitude To Organs and Organists, and William Cole," *The Organ* 87 (August–October 2008): 16.

While I have used similar instrumentation successfully with a fifty-voice men's chorus, I believe this arrangement is best suited to larger ensembles.

This TTBB transcription offers men's choruses and their audiences the opportunity to experience the power of Vaughan Williams's work. As with many of his compositions, *Dona Nobis Pacem* is very accessible for amateur choruses. The new accompaniment for brass septet, organ, and percussion should add authenticity and vitality to the performance, while respecting budgetary constraints.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Entering this project primarily as a conductor and music educator who is not a composer was a bit daunting. My overriding inspiration was bringing Vaughan Williams's *Dona Nobis Pacem* to men's choruses, adding a fantastic work to the men's choral repertoire. I felt the dynamic music and powerful message of this piece was worthy of our TTBB choruses and audiences. By reducing the orchestration to accommodate only ten or eleven instrumentalists, the piece could become accessible to college and community men's choruses with limited budgets while offering a dynamic accompaniment far superior to a simple piano reduction. Could I create a TTBB transcription that maintained the integrity of Vaughan Williams's work?

This quest led to studying men's choral arranging and transcription techniques. To my dismay, the topics are rarely covered in orchestration and choral arranging texts. Some mention of TTBB arranging is available in several choral arranging textbooks, including *The Technique of Choral Composition*, by Archibald Davison (1946); *Choral Arranging*, by Hawley Ades (1966, 1983); and *Contemporary Choral Arranging*, by Arthur Ostrander and Dana Wilson (1986). While I found the arranging information valuable, there was no mention of transcribing SATB works for men's chorus, even though it had been a common practice for many years.

The topic of men's choral music is rarely addressed in academia and the genre is occasionally even denigrated. Archibald Davison, the long time director of the famed Harvard Glee Club, wrote: "any roster of composers of music for men's or women's choruses separately is notable chiefly for the absence of great names."³⁰ He continues his diatribe against male choral music by discouraging composers from entering the field, saying, "Unless from the urge of economic necessity the young composer is not advised to devote himself intensively to composition in these artistically rather unrewarding fields."³¹ Concluding his chapter on composing for "Special Choirs," he references his own experience in these genres and offers a reason for concentrating on mixed choral music:

The author realizes that he has made out a by no means [*sic.*] ingratiating case for these special choirs of men's and women's voices, and he is perhaps too conscious of their defects as individual organizations because of a long and concentrated association with them which has persuaded him that their chief utility consists in furnishing contrast the one to the other.

Preoccupation with mediums, which are, at best, representative of a truncated artistic life appears as an anachronism in an age which recognizes as never before the mutual contributions of the sexes to every form of artistic enterprise. One could not seriously plead for the abolition of men's and women's choruses, but most musicians, we may believe, would heartily welcome a closer union of Cecilia with Apollo.³²

Admittedly, mixed choruses offer a wider vocal range and more varied palette for composers and a majority of great choral works have been composed for SATB voicing. However, the artistic merits of creating substantive music for men's and women's choruses should not be dismissed because these ensembles do not form the majority of

³⁰ Archibald Davison, *The Technique of Choral Composition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946), 127.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 128.

³² *Ibid.*, 139.

our choirs. Sharing quality music with single-sex groups should not be discouraged because they often serve as “second-tier” ensembles in our schools and as amateur choruses in our communities.

It is imperative to the future of our art that we expand our boundaries and expose more people to great choral music. I offer that we must build our art form from the ground up and introduce students and amateurs to the best choral music imaginable that can inspire a love for our art within them. We offer a sublime aesthetic experience that cannot be replicated with modern popular music. But, it can be easily forgotten and replaced by it.

Davison admits “that choruses of men’s voices and of women’s voices are comparatively numerous; a phenomenon which explains itself as soon as one realizes that the spirit which animates most of these organizations is not musical but social.”³³ There are still many men’s choruses active today, and it is precisely the “spirit” of camaraderie and brotherhood that thrives in the social atmosphere presented in these groups, offering a ripe forum from which to cultivate great art. Men’s choruses can achieve the highest levels of artistic excellence and inspire a love of choral music in the singers and their audiences. We owe it to them to provide quality literature for consumption by creating wonderful new works written specifically for TTBB choruses and by transcribing great SATB works for them.

Although not lauded in musical history and composition texts, composers such as Ralph Vaughan Williams have been creating male chorus transcriptions for over a

³³ Ibid., 127.

century. Vaughan Williams believed that music should serve the community and he adapted his compositions for many different combinations of instruments and voices. As I discovered in this project, the process he used in creating a TTBB transcription of his SATB work *Five Mystical Songs* was fairly straightforward. The simplest transcription techniques used by Vaughan Williams can be used as a starting point for future arrangements:

1. Keep the bass part the same.
2. If melody is in the soprano, sing it down 8^{vb} in the T1 part.
3. Move alto and tenor parts between T2 and B1, sometimes writing them down 8^{vb}.
4. If the original composition features women's voices vs. men, then use tenors vs. basses for contrast.
5. Keep accompaniment options the same.

This research can hopefully serve as inspiration for further, related study into Vaughn Williams's transcription techniques. It would be interesting to compare these TTBB transcription techniques with his mixed chorus techniques. He composed several songs for men's chorus first, including "The Turtle Dove" and "Mannin Veen," before arranging them for SATB choirs. Did he simply reverse the process or did he use other techniques to accommodate the expanded tonal palette available with mixed voices? The same discovery process used in this paper could be channeled to determine how Vaughan Williams treated his women's chorus transcriptions. He arranged "Fain Would I Change That Note" for mixed chorus, men's chorus, and women. Further enlightenment on transcribing Vaughan Williams's works could be found in studying the TTBB transcriptions made by Herbert W. Pierce with the permission of Vaughan Williams.

These include “Fantasia on Christmas Carols,” “Wassail Song,” and “Ca’ the Yowes.”

Did Pierce use the same methods as Vaughan Williams, or did he develop additional techniques in making men’s arrangements of the composer’s original SATB works?

Expanded research could be conducted using the music of contemporary composers who write for men’s and mixed voices, such as Morten Lauridsen, David Conte, Randol Alan Bass, and Mack Wilberg. Conversations with these choral composers could provide valuable insight into the processes of choral composition, arranging, and transcription for men’s voices.

I strongly advocate reducing orchestral instrumentation for a small instrumental ensemble and piano or organ. Adding several instruments to the piano or organ greatly enhances the flavor and impact of the piece. Do not neglect percussion. Having one or two percussion instruments really brings a composition to life. Some works will shine with a string quartet added, while others will resonate with a brass ensemble. My idea is not to create new instrumental parts that will fundamentally transform the arrangement, but to utilize parts from the composer’s original instrumentation to fit the availability of your instrumentalists. For example, you can easily pull string parts from Handel’s “Hallelujah Amen,” from *Judas Maccabeus*, rather than rely solely on the piano reduction.

A unique aspect of this project was the transcription of a major choral work using the techniques of Vaughan Williams. The composition emulated, *Five Mystical Songs*, is also a multi-movement work with orchestra, but most of the male chorus transcriptions Vaughan Williams created were single songs, often performed *a cappella*. The transcription techniques used may be applied successfully to compositions of any length.

This list of Vaughan Williams's techniques should provide a valuable tool for composers, arrangers, and conductors wishing to bring an exceptional SATB work to their men's choruses and audiences.

As a conductor and music educator, I do not believe that a majority of the pieces we teach should be transcriptions of SATB works or that every major work available should be transcribed for men's chorus. I fully support the creation of music written specifically for men's voices. There are many major works composed for mixed chorus that would not work for men's chorus, due to many considerations, including length and difficulty. Other criteria that should be considered when deciding the viability of an SATB composition for men's chorus transcription include musical and educational value, programming needs of the chorus and audience, and importance of the message. I believe that *Dona Nobis Pacem* meets these criteria.

It is my hope that this project should serve as a means of encouragement for composers and men's chorus conductors to continue research into TTBB choral arranging and transcription techniques, create additional transcriptions using exceptional SATB choral works, and teach these techniques to our music students. The use of transcriptions is not meant to supplant traditional choral composing and arranging skills, rather to offer an additional tool that can be used to create additional men's choral literature that strives to maintain the closest integrity to the original SATB compositions. Every choral experience that a singer has, whether in a men's, women's, or mixed chorus, can be transformative. Teach great music that touches people's lives.

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APPENDIX I

Organ Registration Comments from J. Melvin Butler

These comments are included, with permission, from Dr. Butler's doctoral dissertation, "Three Choral Works by Ralph Vaughan Williams Transcribed for Choir and Organ," (DMA diss., Eastman School of Music, 1975). Because his organ-only transcription of Dona Nobis Pacem was the basis for this organ part, I believe his comments on registration will be very helpful for organists performing my arrangement. His comments are directly quoted, except for several spots where he references other Vaughan Williams transcriptions he created.

– Kenneth Harned

The organ reductions presented here require a substantial amount of effort for preparation by a trained organist, but they do not attempt to employ virtuosity for its own sake. As many elements of the orchestral score as practical have been included, but never to the point of being awkward or heavy.

A few overall performance suggestions and explanations of the registration indications, dynamics, articulations, etc. shown in the transcription will help the organist understand more clearly and perhaps simplify some of the problems involved in preparing this work for performance.

The transcription can be played on almost any type of organ. While more orchestral colors can be obtained on a larger (three- or four-manual instrument, it is certainly possible to play this work on a small two-manual organ. The only prerequisite is that there be at least two contrasting sounds of approximately equal volume. Quite often two distinct parts occur simultaneously within the same tessitura and are impossible to play on one manual, since they require separate colors (although of approximately equal

volume). Therefore, the transcription will not be successful on a highly unified organ or on an electronic instrument which does not have independent tone generators for the separate manuals.

On the other hand, a large, romantic instrument, which faithfully imitates all the orchestral instruments, is certainly not necessary for a satisfactory realization of this transcription. One or two solo stops are the only “orchestral” requirements, and almost all organs of any size have at least one solo reed.

The suggested registrations, for the most part, apply to a small, but complete, two-manual (great and swell preferably) and pedal contemporary pipe organ. This instrument should have complete principal choruses through mixtures on both keyboards, strings on the swell, an oboe or cromorne on the swell, perhaps a reed or two in the pedal, and soft 16', 8', and 4' flutes in the pedal. The registrations indicated in the transcriptions may be adjusted at will to fit the basic scheme. Ideals for combination set-ups have not been indicated in the transcriptions because of the great variation in tonal design and number of pistons available from organ to organ. It is highly desirable, though, to set up pedal pistons or toe studs to add and take off soft sixteen-foot stops.

It is necessary to make a few conversions from the orchestral instruments used by Vaughan Williams to the types of organ stops available. Obviously, an orchestral ensemble passage including woodwinds would not require the organist to use oboe, bassoon, and clarinet stops, for those organ sounds are much too individual to be used in an ensemble. Instead, the organist should use flutes and light principals at various pitches, with perhaps an oboe stop if it blends well with the flutes and is not too obtrusive. The following conversion chart shows which organ stops most successfully reproduce the

corresponding sound. Of course, these differ on each instrument and one must use their own judgment for the most realistic and musical results.

ORGAN CONVERSION CHART (by J. Melvin Butler)

ORCHESTRAL INSTRUMENT	ORGAN REGISTRATION
strings (piano)	strings and celestas
strings (mezzo)	strings, celestas, flutes 8', 4'
strings (forte)	foundations 8' (and 4')
woodwinds (ensemble-piano)	soft flutes 8' & 4'; soft oboe, perhaps soft 2'
woodwinds (ensemble-forte)	above plus light mixtures
piccolo (in ensemble)	high mixtures or mutations
flutes	flutes and bourdons
oboe	oboe or bassoon
English horn	English horn or shalmei
clarinet	clarinet or cromorne
bassoons (solo)	basson 16' or oboe 8'
full ensemble	principal choruses through mixtures (should not include celestas or solo reeds)

Special attention must be paid to the foundation pitches of the pedal parts. This is very clearly indicated as 16' or 8'. If there are toe studs available for the pedal stops, one should be set up with 8' stops as the lowest pitch and another set up with the 16' foundation stops. If this is impossible (i.e., if there are no toe studs), it is acceptable in most cases to play all the pedal parts with a 16' foundation pitch as long as it is not too heavy. There are only a few solo passages where 8' pitch is absolutely necessary. These passages are indicated in the score. Registration suggestions have been given based on the corresponding orchestral color. The exact orchestral instrumentation is given in parentheses throughout the transcription so that the organist may use the above table or the organ registrations included in the score as a guide.

The dynamic indications usually refer to the position of the swell pedal (pp = completely closed, ff = completely open), and one would not expect an organist to produce the wide range of dynamic levels possible with a full symphony orchestra, except perhaps by the use of the crescendo pedal on the most orchestral organs. In many cases, especially for passages played on solo stops, the appropriate dynamics will automatically occur on a well-voiced organ as a result of the rise and fall of the melodic line.

Attention to correct articulation is important throughout. Articulation marks (slurs, etc.) have been carefully copied from the orchestral score. It should be noted that the correct phrasing marks in the score are indicated in the wind parts and not in the string parts: the slurs in the string parts refer to bowings and do not necessarily correspond to the phrasing of the complete melodic line. When no phrasing slurs appear, the notes should be played detached—the length depending upon the acoustics of the

particular church or hall. All staccato marks in the pedal part indicate the imitation of a cello and/or bass pizzicato.

These registrations, articulations, suggestions, etc. are, of course, not the only solutions to an authentic realization of these works. Each organ is different, and each acoustical situation is different. The best way to prepare these transcriptions is to study the original orchestral score and listen to available recordings. The indications in this text and in the transcriptions are only a basic guide to the correct interpretation.

Five Mystical Songs Transcription Chart

This chart was created to identify how Vaughan Williams utilized his original SATB vocal lines when making his TTBB version of *Five Mystical Songs*.

Abbreviation Key:

1. Vocal parts are identified by their first initial and number (if there is more than one note on the staff), ex. – T1 = tenor 1, B1 = bass 1 (or baritone)
2. ↓ = new note is one octave below original, ex. - S↓ = new note is one octave below original soprano part
3. Measure numbers will be placed in brackets and specific beats will be identified with a superscript ‘b’ and the corresponding beat number, ex. – [4^{b3}] = measure 4, beat 3
4. NEW = new notes or line composed

No. 1 – Easter

TTBB SATB

[m. 4–6]

T1 T (in orig. S doubled up 8va)

T2 T (in orig. S doubled up 8va)

B1 B (in orig. A doubled up 8va)

B2 B (in orig. A doubled up 8va)

[m. 11–13]

T1 S↓

T2 T

B1 B1 (in orig. A1 doubled this up 8va)

B2 B2 (in orig. A2 doubled this up 8va)

[m. 27–32]

T1 T1[27–31]
 S1↓ [32]

T2 A↓ [27–31^{b2}]
 T1&T2 [31^{b3}–32]

B1 B1

B2 B2

[m. 60–66]

T1 S1↓ down (orig. S2 part dropped [64–66])

T2 T [60] – T
 A1↓ [61–62]

B1 NEW [60–62]
 T [64–66]

B2 B

[m. 76–82]

T1 m. 76 – T, m. 77–78 – A, m. 79 – T, m. 80–82 – T (orig. S/A were 8va above)

T2 S↓ [76–78^{b1}]
 T [78^{b2}–82]

B1 A↓ [76]
 T [77]
 S↓ [78]
 A↓ [79–82]

B2 B

No. 2 – I Got Me Flowers

TTBB SATB

[m. 33–36]

T1 A [33–34^{b2}]
 NEW [34^{b3}–36] (uses notes from A, T, & S)

T2 T [33]
 S↓ [34–36] (except [35^{b3-4}] NEW)

B1 S [33]
 T [34–36] (NEW notes [34^{b2-3}])

B2 B

[m. 37–38]

T1 S down 8va for 2 ½ beats, new note leads to S in normal octave

T2 similar to A (1st note down 8va), but beat 3 is orig. T

B1 new line, ends last three T notes

B2 T down 8 for 2 ½ beats (was orig. rest), then B same

[m. 39–40]

T1 S↓

T2 NEW (new stepwise line moves to unison in 40, last note was orig. 2-pt)

B1 NEW (new stepwise line moves to unison in 40, last note was orig. 2-pt)

B2 B

[m. 41–42]

All parts UNISON (Originally unison at the octave with S/A)

No. 3 – Love Bade Me Welcome

TTBB SATB
[m. 65–69] (original had S/A singing 8va above)

T1 T/B (unison)

T2 T/B (unison)

B1 T/B (unison)

B2 T/B (unison)

[72–75] (original had S singing 8va above)

T1 T/A

T2 T/A

B1 B

B2 B

[79–86] (original had S/A singing 8va above)

T1 T/B (unison)

T2 T/B (unison)

B1 T/B (unison)

B2 T/B (unison)

No. 4 – The Call

Chorus tacet entire movement. Baritone solo only.

No. 5 – Antiphon

TTBB SATB
[m. 15–19]

T1 T/B (unison)

T2 T/B (unison)

B1 B (tacet)

B2 B (tacet)

[m. 20–25]

T1 T [20]
 A↓ [21]
 NEW [22–23^{b2}] (possibly because A was too high?)
 S↓ [23^{b3}–25]

T2 S↓

B1 S↓

B2 B

[m. 26–30]

T1 S↓

T2 A↓

B1 NEW [26]
 A↓ [27–30]

B2 B↓

[m. 34–49] (uses high voices in unison, then low voices in unison – originally 8va apart)

T1 T (S doubled 8va)

T2 T

B1 B (A doubled 8va)

B2 B

[m. 50–54] (reduces voicing from triad to unison and third)

T1 A

T2 T

B1 B [52]
 T [53] (B rhythm)
 B [54]

B2 B [51]
 A↓ [52]
 B [53–54]

[m. 55–59] (reduces voicing from triad to unison and third)

T1 S↓

T2 A↓

B1 B

B2 B

[m. 67–77] (m. 67 unison in all parts, removed orig. ATB stepwise movement)

T1 S↓

T2 S↓ [67–70]
A↓ [71–77]

B1 S↓ [67]
NEW [68–69] (with notes from S and T)
T↓ [70–77] (except [73^{b1}] is orig. A↓ note)

B2 S↓ [67–68^{b2}]
B [68^{b3}–69]
B↓ [70–77] (expands tonal palate downward)

[m. 82–87]

T1 S↓

T2 T [82–85] (tacet)
A1↓ [86–87]

B1 A↓ [82–85]
A2↓ [85–87]

B2 B

[m. 90–96]

T1 S↓

T2 A↓ [90–92]
NEW [93–94^{b3}]
T [94^{b4}–96]

B1 A↓ (with several notes from B and T lines in m. 91 & 95, adds the fifth of the chord, ‘f’, in m. 93)

B2 B

[m. 97–109]

T1	S↓	
T2	T [97–102] B [103] (quarter note) A [104–106] T [107]	
B1	A↓ [97–102] T [103–106] B1 [107–109]	
B2	B (except [99 ^{b2} –100 ^{b1}] is B↓)	

[m. 110–119]

T1	S↓	
T2	A↓ (except [110 ^{b1}] is from B)	
B1	T↓ (except [110 ^{b1}] is from A↓)	
B2	B↓	

[m. 120–127]

T1	S↓	
T2	A↓ [120–122 ^{b3}] B↑ [122 ^{b4}] T2 [123 ^{b1}](T2) A↓[123 ^{b2} –124]	
B1	T [120] T↓ [121 ^{b2} –127] (except [121 ^{b1}] is from B)	
B2	B [120] B↓ [121–123 ^{b3}] B 123 ^{b4} –127] (except [124 ^{b3}] is B↓)	

Chronological List of Vaughan Williams's TTBB compositions and arrangements:

- “Music, When Soft Voices Die” (1893) – part-song for male voices, first performed by the Cambridge Musical Club
- “Bushes and Briars” – arr. for male voices (TTBB) in 1908, then arr. for SATB chorus in 1924 (orig. arr. for solo voice and piano)
- “The Jolly Ploughboy” – TTBB, a cappella, a Sussex folksong (1908), pub. Novello, (orig. arr. for solo voice and piano)
- “Down Among the Dead Men” (1912) – TTBB a cappella pub. Joseph Williams & Co.
- “Ward the Pirate” (1912) – TTBB, pub. Novello in 1935 in Folk Songs II, (orig. arr. for solo voice and piano)
- “The Winter is Gone” (1912) – TTBB, English folksong, a cappella, published Novello, available online, originally included in The Orpheus, a collection of glees and part songs for male voices, new series no. 536
- “Jack the Sailor” (1919) – TTBB male voice arrangement included in The Motherland Song Book, Vol. 3, published by Stainer and Bell
- “We Be Three Poor Mariners” (1919) – arr. for mixed voices and 3 male voices (TTB) – arrangement included in The Motherland Song Book, Vol. 3, published by Stainer and Bell
- “The Turtle Dove” (1919) – TBB and piano, published by Curwen & Sons, Ltd.
 - Also arranged for SSATB (1924), also unison voices with piano or orchestral accompaniment
- “Heart of Oak” (1921) – TTBB a cappella
 - Also arranged for unison singing with piano, SATB with soprano solo and piano (1921)
- “The Farmer’s Boy” (1921) – TTBB, old English air, a cappella, published by Stainer & Bell Ltd

- “Loch Lomond” (1921) – TTBB with bar. Solo, a cappella, pub. by Stainer & Bell Ltd
 - Also arranged for SSATB, a cappella (1931)
- “Old Folks at Home” (1921) – TTBB with baritone solo, melody by Stephen Foster, pub. Stainer & Bell Ltd
- “A Farmer’s Son So Sweet” (1923) – folk-song TBB w/ piano, pub. Stainer & Bell Ltd
 - Also arranged for SSATBB (for the English Singers) (1923)
- “High Germany” (1923) – arr. for male voices with piano accompaniment, solos for tenor and bass. Published Stainer & Bell Ltd
- “The Seeds of Love” (1923) – TTBB with TB solos, piano ad. lib. published in Stainer & Bell’s Male Voice Choir series, was originally in a folksong collection with piano, available online
- “Ca’ the Yowes” (1925) – TTBB, a cappella, transcribed by Herbert Pierce, Scottish Folk Song, published J. Curwen & Sons
 - Originally composed for SATB and tenor solo, a cappella (1922)
- “Fain Would I Change That Note” (1927) – TTBB, pub. Novello, a capella, available online, originally composed SATB (1907), SSA also available
- “An Acre of Land” (1934) – TTBB with piano, English folk-song, pub. Oxford University Press
 - Also arr. SATB (1934) and unison voices with piano (1950)
- “The Ploughman” (1934) – TTBB with piano accompaniment, pub. Oxford University Press
- “Tobacco’s but an Indian Weed” (1934)- TTBB a cappella, pub. Oxford University Press
- “The World It Went Well With Me Then” (1934) – TTBB a cappella, pub. Oxford University Press

- *Nine Carols for Male Voices* (1942) – TTBB a cappella, pub. Oxford University Press
- “The Vagabond” (1952)– TTBB, pub. Boosey & Hawkes, a cappella

Ralph Vaughan Williams’s Works Transcribed for Male Chorus by Herbert W. Pierce:

- *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* (1925), originally composed SATB (1912)
- “Mannin Veen” (1913)- Men - Arranged for Male Voices by Herbert W. Pierce, also published by Curwen, date not noted, originally arranged SATB (1913)
- “Wassail Song” (1923) –originally composed SATB (1913)

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Academic Division
Managing Director: Martin Richardson

Music Department
Great Clarendon Street
Oxford OX2 6DP
United Kingdom

+44 (0) 1865 556767 *telephone*
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